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The Handbook of Managing and Marketing Tourism Experiences

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Part I

Planning: Design and Creating Tourism Experiences

Aim: to consider and analyze related issues and aspects in various fields/contexts

CHAPTER

1

Experience-Based
Service Design

Özlem Güzel

ABSTRACT

Purpose – In the tourism sector, the differentiation is difficult in the commoditized market. The main challenge for businesses is to design the experiences which would create awareness and difference. With this foresight, this chapter aims to show an experience-based service design path built around various elements such as sensations, emotions, human relations, innovations, and values.

Methodology/approach – This chapter is based on extensive literature review, including books, journals, articles, conference papers, and search reports. Furthermore, the Singapore Airlines web page was used as an important source of information to examine the instructional path built suggested in the literature review.

Findings – As it has been determined by the general review, experience-based service design contains different components, and with these evaluations the experience-based service design was established in this chapter within three steps: explore, design, and positioning. Furthermore, on the case study of Singapore Airlines, the tracks of these three steps have been investigated. Especially, explore and design dimensions have been identified to be used mainly during the experience design.

Practical implications – From the highlights of the literature review, an instructional path for experience-based service design and implementation process is highlighted in three

parts and this instructional path would guide business managers/experience engineers.

Originality/value – As the experience-based service design has been increasingly receiving the attention of the business' managers in the tourism sector, an overview examination of experience design, and being instructional guide will direct them to implicate the dimensions in practice.

Keywords: Experience marketing; experience design; service design; Singapore airlines

Introduction

Customers having many choices, but being less satisfied is the paradox of the 21st century (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In this context, a new approach referred to as Customer Experience Management (CEM) has emerged as a new perspective for far-sighted businesses to use their capabilities and resources effectively in creating value and experience. This new approach has become a strategic competitive marketing tool for creating value as the traditional marketing has been losing its effectiveness in the 21st century (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007; Lasalle & Britton, 2003; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Schmitt, 1999; Shaw, 2005; Smith & Wheeler, 2002). Shaw and Ivens (2002) refer the existence of the seven-point philosophy during customer experience design (CED). According to them, customer experience; must be a long-term competitive advantage source; must respond the customers' rational and emotional expectations consistently; should focus on stimulating the selected emotions; should be created with inspiring leadership; needs strong organization/motivated staff; must take the consumers in the center of experience implementations; should transform into the design of the brand.

If the industry is such an industry like tourism, experiences consist of the main core of the brand as it is one of the main sectors that recreative, unforgettable and attractive experiences could be created by evoking the emotions and feelings (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Slatten, Mehmetoğlu, Svensson, & Svaeri, 2009; Williams, 2006). Schmitt (2013) states that the CEM framework is made up of five basic steps: analyzing

the experiential world of the customer, building the experiential platform, designing the brand experience, structuring the customer interface and engaging in continuous innovation. Considering this framework within the literature review, it has been revealed the experience-based service design has many phases and dimensions. This chapter is going to provide a practical instructional path in three steps, including “explore, design and positioning” (EDP). Explore dimension contains exploring the business’ self-sufficiency and understanding of the customer world as these are recognized as the beginning of the experiential journey. Design dimension refers to the preparation of the experience stage and involves experience value promise, actors, innovation and creativity, theme, and atmosphere. The positioning dimension contains the customer interface and placing into the customer’s mind concluded with memorability. After a general review, a case study will be evaluated to follow the clues of experience design through these three dimensions.

Explore

The experience design process is defined as both science and art. In the scientific dimension, the customer expectations, needs, and priorities are discovered, the customer experience is mapped and the critical points are identified by focusing on the customer’s senses (Smith & Wheeler, 2002). This dimension is named in this chapter as the explore dimension containing tips for the business about themselves and their customers to start their tourism experience design journey.

EXPLORING THE BUSINESS’ SELF-SUFFICIENCY

CEM is created by exceeding the customers’ physical/emotional expectations by designing inward (Shaw, 2005). Carbone and Haeckel (1994) see the acquisition of service experience design skills as the first phase of the experience-based design. The business managers should analyze on where they stand on the experience circle before the pre-design phase. In this context, Shaw (2005) has created a basic model to understand on which stage the business stands in the CEM circle. According to the model, there are four orientation areas including “inexperienced, operational, illuminated and natural.” Inexperienced organizations focus on the products and these organizations are insensitive to customer

needs. Their approach shapes on the philosophy; “take it or leave it” or/and “what do you expect from a product at this price.”

On the next stage, operational organizations are those who realize the importance of the customer. However, these organizations, focusing on just the physical aspects of the customer experience (e.g., Quick response to the telephone), tend to ignore the other aspects of the experience (Cetin & Walls, 2016). In the third area, the organizations see the customer experience as important as the customers and transfer this foresight to all employees. These organizations are aware of the fact that emotions are a major component of customer experience and they implement new processes in order to evoke emotions. In the final stages, the natural organizations seeing the customer experience as the genes of business. They are aware of the critical role of emotions and feelings. Business leaders and all employees build the experience by using the theater as an experience stage together after identifying critical points (Shaw, 2005).

In order to reach the level of natural organizations, business should create a new wall for creating the experience containing effective values. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) propose four activities to build up this wall; establishing a deep dialogue with the customers, improving customer interaction, taking advantage of new technological developments, and enabling the exchange of information.

UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMERS EXPECTATIONS

The customers’ world must be understood by looking from the holistic perspective from different aspects in order to create the experience context before the designing (Thusy & Morris, 2004). Understanding what the target customers expect from the business and which values they look for have to be the critical steps of the experience design. The difficulty of obtaining the accurate understanding of how users feel about the products is the main challenge during the experience design (Kashimura, Kumagai, & Furuya, 2013). Moreover, Zaltman and Zaltman (2008) state that many businesses are facing with the problem named ‘lack the depth’ during the analysis of customers world. This lack of depth results because of the absence of thinking based on imagination, not having the benefit from the insights brought by different disciplines and not discussing the ideas coming from consumers. In order to eliminate the lack of depth from the perspective of creative paradigm and to establish the CED with

effective values, customers should be included in the value creation and experience design process as being the continuously collaborative partners (Michelli, 2007; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Schmitt, 2003; Smith & Wheeler, 2002; Tsai, 2005).

Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2010) called this method as 'strengthen the customer' which let the customers have the opportunity to design their own experience by including into the business' mission. The analysis of the customers' lifestyles and their socio-cultural environment in which they live is an important step in understanding the customer world. In addition, for creating the personalized and unique experiences, flexible research methods should be used, particularly focusing on different interests and needs. In order to get realistic results, real stimulants should be used and the natural experiential environment should be observed during the research. Moreover, experience engineers should benefit from the customers' imagination world. Kashimura et al. (2013) offer collecting user complaints, making observations and conducting interviews in order to specify the user requirements and user's characteristics as they identify this step as human-centered design.

After the scientific process of the experience design has been completed the artistic dimension emerges containing the creativity and value creation as Smith and Wheeler (2002) refer. This next dimension is named in this chapter as the design.

Design

The design process being analogous to theatrical show contains creating experience value, actors (human resources), innovation and creativity, experience theme and experience atmosphere (scene).

EXPERIENCE VALUE PROMISE

Experiential value promise (EVP), constituting the basis of experience has to change the customers' lives and provide distinctive benefits (Knapp, 2008). Manschot and Visser (2011) define the value as the activity of assigning importance to a thing or an experience and they add that after experiencing a service through sensory perception, people produce an overall picture or feeling about how valuable an experience is. Similarly, Schmitt (2003, 1999) who define the experience as the changing the sensory,

emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational values with the functional value, describes the EVP as presented image.

EVP resides in the experience of consumption, including the symbolic and non-utilitarian aspects of use, such as fantasies, feelings and fun (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). So, it manifests itself in the form of emotions, testimonials, attitudes and users' behaviors (Manschot & Visser, 2011). So, Kotler et al. (2010) state that businesses have to focus on the mind (mission: satisfy/values: be better), heart (mission: realize the desire/value: differentiate) and soul (mission: create love-compassion/value: make a difference) in the value-based matrix model. As the experiences create personal meaning for people, the EVP should be unique and personalized (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Scott, Laws, & Boksberger, 2010). To achieve this, experience value should be established on five steps modules; sense, feel, think, act and relate (Schmitt, 2003).

CREATING ACTORS FOR EXPERIENCE SHOW

Experiences are the interactions, emerging as a result of the interactions with customers and employees (Lasalle & Britton, 2003; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Shaw, 2005). So, after analyzing the customer expectations and creating the brand promise, the businesses should have an experientially focused business culture and employees (actors) to meet the expectations (Kotler et al., 2010; Schmitt, 2003; Shaw, 2005; Thusy & Morris, 2004). Carbone and Haeckel (1994) define the employees as the humanic clues. According to them, humanics determine the interpersonal relationship and customers' feelings, but humanics would be more effective when they are integrated with mechanics (atmospheric clues). While Smith and Wheeler (2002) define the internal resources as the intellectual capital/power which will fulfill the value promise, they offer four suggestions to the managers to build up the intellectual capital; (1) employ qualified staff, (2) train them in accordance with the brand value, (3) adopt their behaviors through the critical experience points, and (4) treat them like customers and reward their correct behavior (Smith & Wheeler, 2002). Also, experience being built deliberately for individuals, it requires the employment of the internal resources whose imagination have progressed in a holistic way (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Thusy & Morris, 2004). Moreover, visionary leadership, strategic forecasting, entrepreneurial/innovative/collaborative environment, creativity, imagination development projects/training, social changes,

different abilities/expertises and different idea-generating techniques should be used (Kotler et al., 2010; Martins & Terblanche, 2003; Papatya, 2006; Schmitt, 2003).

CONTINUOUS INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

Experience design is a journey and this service delivery process consists of numerous touchpoints having the potential of continuous innovation and implementation within the new technological changes for the development/reproduction of the experiential value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Voss & Zomerdijk, 2007). Schmitt (2003) refers that the innovation adds value to the customer experience and improve the customers' lives by offering new solutions, so intrinsic prerequisite is needed during the production development stage. But the transition process through collaborative innovation, the experience is very difficult for many businesses focusing on the product and service as the experiential innovation require imagination and creativity. As the creativity is the production of the new/useful/valuable ideas (Martins & Terblanche, 2003), Kashimura et al. (2013) offer visualization methods focusing on flexible thinking for developing ideas from various perspectives such as workshops (for developing/visualizing creative ideas), experience table technique (presents the user's behaviors and experiences in chronological order), stage prototyping (the use of actual-scale mock-up with dummy equipment to provide a realistic environment), created experience case scenarios and business origami technique (visualize/finalize the scenario).

EXPERIENCE THEME

Businesses and destinations could create unforgettable experiences by drifting the people through the entertainment by real or imagined themes/stories (Carbone, 2004; Mossberg, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999; Toffler, 1970). The theme is the basis of the experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Healey (2008) states that customers' buying behavior could be driven by storytelling and creating emotions as they are the critical drivers. Therefore, Toffler (1970) calls the artists as 'experience engineers' who will create the theme. An effective experience theme must be unique and compel the competitors (McLellan, 2000); have to be focused on being a platform which adds value to the brand's style/appearance and contents (Schmitt, 2003)